
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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| Landmark/District: | Mount Pleasant Historic District | (x) Consent Calendar |
| Address: | 1662 Irving Street, NW | |
| Meeting Date: | July 26, 2012 | (x) Alterations |
| Case Number: | 12-512 | (x) Additions |
| Staff Reviewer: | Tim Dennée | |

The applicant, Trout Design Studio, agent and architects for owners Jon and Jen Rosenwasser, requests the Board's clearance of a permit application to remove a small frame addition and enclosed porch from the rear of the subject property and to construct in their place a one-story addition and a small second-story addition. The project would also add to the attic story, raising the roof rearward of the ridge and extending the rear wall upward.

The structures to be demolished are of little significance; the two-story structure appears to be a heavily altered former porch.

The proposed extension of the main floor would accommodate a new kitchen and family room. It would extend a maximum of 30 feet from the present rear wall of the main block, although the rear doorway would be set in six feet from that.¹ Although deep, the addition would extend no deeper than the original rear wings of the row immediately to the west. Other houses on the subject row have not been expanded in any significant way, but there are several other buildings on the 1600 block that are much deeper.

The contemporary exterior would be faced with brick, and the new openings would contain full-light doors under fixed canopies. The addition's roof would be a flat, green roof, pierced by a skylight not visible from the ground. The addition's open interior plan calls for the demolition of most of the rear wall of the house at that level, something that is not ideal, but is consistent with similar projects that have been reviewed favorably by the Board.

The second-story addition would be a little larger than five by seven feet, an addition to the master bathroom accommodating only a shower stall. The wall abutting the neighbor to the east would be of masonry construction, while the rear and interior side walls would be of glass block, for natural light. The use of glass block is unusual in the historic district, with the exception of some 16th Street apartments, but it is in keeping with a clearly separate addition designed in a contemporary vocabulary—as opposed to being incorporated into the body of the historic house. It is similar to the use of the large glazed openings on the first-floor addition, distinct from the punched openings of the house.

¹ However, this may create a nonconforming court condition.

The raising of the roof in the attic is a type of alteration that has been approved in Mount Pleasant and elsewhere on a number of occasions.² The key is to keep the change invisible from the front, without visibly affecting the roof ridge or the side parapets. Ideally, the rear wall would set in from the wall below—to retain the continuity of the roofline of the row at rear—but there is relatively little space in the attic to give up. The drawings indicate no higher parapets, and a roof that continues to shed rearward, so that there need not be any visibility of the new roof or unusual flashing conditions at the ridge.

Although this is a permit application, the drawings are not yet working drawings. In addition to the structural and mechanical, electrical and plumbing drawings (will there be rooftop mechanical?), the materials and products to be used have not been specified despite being well depicted.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Board find the application to be compatible with the character of the historic district, with a delegation to staff of further review, contingent on the following conditions:

- 1. the raising of the attic roof, including any parapets or fire walls, not be visible from Irving Street;*
- 2. that there be no rooftop mechanical equipment or ducts visible from the ground;*
- 3. that staff review product information on the doors, trim, windows and canopies, as well as a sample of the brick to be used.*

² They have not always been successful, but the problematic ones have been where the parapets were prominently raised or the roof rose rearward of the ridge, and the projects simply weren't built as drawn.